



Traffic Safety News and Facts for Employers December 17, 2007

Michigan News You Can Use

MDOT launches new winter safety campaign: "Ice and Snow, Take It Slow"

The Michigan Department of Transportation recently announced a new safety campaign which reminds motorists to use caution when faced with winter driving conditions. More information including downloadable posters are available at <http://michigan.gov/som/0,1607,7-192--180917--00.html>. The Michigan State Police also has a website that includes winter travel advisories for freeways and state trunk lines, link to: <http://www.ohsp.state.mi.us/rw/home.htm>

Latest Traffic Safety News

Trucking Company Seeks Exemptions to Manage Fatigue

Dart Transit Co. is asking for an exemption for 200 drivers from the 14-hour clock and split-rest limitation provisions of the hours-of-service regulations. The owner-operators would participate in a fatigue risk management program that encourages nighttime sleep and uses onboard recorders to monitor rest schedules. "What we want is a rested driver behind the wheel," said Dart's vice president of safety and compliance. "But we want a little more flexibility around when he gets that rest." Dart says the 14-hour rule penalizes drivers who stop to rest for less than eight hours, even if it's at night and sensible for reducing fatigue. Dart's plan would focus on nocturnal sleep; electronic monitors would make sure a driver's truck is not moving for a minimum of six hours from 9 p.m. to 9 a.m. For more information, go to <http://www.etrucker.com/apps/news/article.asp?id=64913> (if you have difficulty linking to this file please copy and paste in your web browser.)

Parents, "Rules for the Road," Take Action to Keep Your Teens Safe

December is National Drunk and Drugged Driving Prevention month, an important opportunity to alert parents to new research that shows that teens are just as likely to drive under the influence of marijuana as alcohol. For more information link to <http://view.exacttarget.com/?j=fe651573706d057d7214&m=fefe1575716403&ls=fd110717c62037c70117875&l=fec21677746d037e&s=fe171c78746c01797d1278&ju=%ex2;joburlid%>

IBM Expects Technology to Change Driving in Five Years

IBM predicts that the way one drives will be dramatically different in five years. The company foresees automated services to find the cheapest gas, GPS technology that lets drivers avoid traffic jams and sophisticated analytics that will ease congestion in entire cities. Similar programs are underway in Singapore and Stockholm, but privacy concerns and politics are making them difficult to implement in the United States. Such technological innovation is more about linking and using existing technology instead of creating something new. IBM is testing an "artificial passenger" that allows a driver to control functions hands-free through voice recognition and another program that sends signals to drivers about black ice or a speeding car and automatically slows the vehicle. Ford is working on a feature that would provide drivers with real-time traffic information, and General Motors' OnStar enables law enforcement to stop a stolen vehicle remotely and alerts first responders to the severity of a crash. For more information, go to <http://www.forbesautos.com/news/features/2007/ibm-five-in-five-future-car-trends.html>. Source: ForbesAutos.com, December 5, 2007



Ignition Interlock Advancements Might Be Key to Fighting Drunk Driving

Progress against drunk driving has stalled in the last five years, but ignition interlock technology has improved, making the devices a viable option to fight the most frequently committed crime in America. "We need to stop the 'catch and release' approach by the courts, make ignition interlocks required for all convicted drunk drivers, and work for advanced technology that will not allow drunk drivers to start their vehicles," said Chuck Hurley, CEO of Mothers Against Drunk Driving. Unlike past interlocks, today's versions require rolling retests while the car is running, so drivers can't start the car and then start drinking. As a safety feature, the engine does not shut off if the interlock detects alcohol after the car starts running. Instead that information is recorded on a data log. For more information, go to http://ncsl.org/magazine/weekly/SLWeeklyDec_Ignition.htm

Source: National Conference of State Legislatures, State Legislatures Magazine, November 30, 2007

Lifetime Achievement Award Presented to Two Air Bag Pioneers

U.S. Sen. Elizabeth Dole and Public Citizen President Joan Claybrook received the first Lifetime Achievement Awards from the Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety for their contributions to advancing air bag technology. As administrator of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration from 1977-81, Claybrook implemented the first rule that required automatic occupant protection, including air bags. Senator Dole was the U.S. transportation secretary from 1983-87, when a new rule encouraged states to adopt seat belt laws and the auto industry to consider installing air bags as standard equipment. In the past 20 years, air bags have been credited with saving 25,000 lives.

Cars Could Take Control in Future

As baby boomers age, they won't have to worry about how they'll get around, because electronic chauffeurs will help them run errands. Already consumers can buy cars with adaptive cruise control, which can electronically space cars on the highway. Engineers have made amazing progress, evidenced by DARPA's last test in which six cars completed a 60-mile course where they dealt with traffic along the way. Some people will never want to yield control, and others are concerned that car computers will "crash." But unlike humans, smart cars wouldn't be distracted or drive drunk. Because smart cars could follow each other more closely, road capacity would be doubled or tripled. They wouldn't even need lane markings or traffic lights, because they'd communicate with each other. All of this could happen by 2050 or sooner. For more information, go to

http://www.nytimes.com/2007/12/04/science/04tier.html?_r=1&oref=slogin

Source: The New York Times, December 4, 2007

CVSA Announces Saved by the Belt Program

The Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance posted information about its Saved by the Belt Award Program on its Web site. The goal of the program for commercial motor vehicle drivers is to save lives and prevent injuries and crashes by promoting voluntary seat belt use. The award also recognizes drivers who have survived a crash because they wore their belts. It's patterned after the International Association of Chiefs of Police's National Law Enforcement Saved by the Belt/Airbag Awards Program. For more information, go to http://www.cvsa.org/programs/saved_by_the_belt.cfm

Three New England States Partner for Holiday Drunk Driving Enforcement Message

Connecticut, Rhode Island and Massachusetts state police troopers have teamed up for a joint holiday drunk driving information campaign. Troopers from each state are featured in a poster with an open jail cell and the message, "Don't make us your bed and breakfast this holiday season." That message will show up on 600 movie screens, dozens of mall signs and bars and restaurants in the tri-state area. Heineken USA paid for \$100,000 of the advertising, more than the states could have done by themselves. Source: The Hartford Courant, December 7, 2007



Magazine Picks 10 Vehicles that are a Safe Bet in the Long Run

In today's economy, car shoppers should look for a vehicle that's not only light on the wallet today, but also has a strong value that will hold up over the long term. U.S. News and World Report recommends 10 cars that are smart buys with above-average affordability, reliability and fuel economy. The top 10 picks are: Ford Escape, Kia Rio5, Chrysler 300, Nissan Altima, Hyundai Santa Fe, Toyota Yaris, Mazda M-X-5 Miata, Honda Odyssey, Audi A4 and Volkswagen GTI

Source: U.S. World and News Report, November 28, 2007

New Jersey Investigates Locations Where Drunk Drivers had Last Drink

New Jersey law enforcement officers are asking motorists they stop for drunk driving where they had their last drink. Police send that information to the New Jersey Alcoholic Beverage Control Agency, who then sends investigators to the establishments that are most frequently cited. The measure is an attempt to crack down on places that serve drinks to customers who are already intoxicated. The agency can revoke or suspend an establishment's license or levy a fine, depending on what the investigators uncover during a visit. Texas has set up a similar program, and Washington publishes a list of the top "last drink" locations. Source: Join Together, November 30, 2007

Two Warning Collision Systems Pass Almost All Tests

Two automobile collision warning systems have passed most of the U.S. National Institute of Standards and Technology's performance tests. The warning systems were created by two different companies and passed nearly 30 tests but had trouble detecting whether vehicles were in or out of lanes on curves. In some tests there were also significant warning delays. The prototypes use radar to assess collision threats and then warn drivers. When a system passes all the tests, the Transportation Department will equip 20 automobiles and 10 trucks with the systems and ask volunteers to use them for a month. For more information, go to

http://www.upi.com/NewsTrack/Science/2007/12/10/us_agency_tests_auto_crash_alert_system/8261/

Source: United Press International, December 10, 2007

Design Expert Advocates for Intuitive Vehicles

In design professor Don Norman's new book, The Design of Future Things, he says cars have become so comfortable and easy to drive that people are becoming distracted from the dangers of the road. Vehicles should give feedback, but only if it feels natural and unobtrusive. Something subtle, such as seat vibration, is more effective than blips and bleeps. He says a problem with car design today is that they're a smooth ride at 100 miles per hour, letting drivers forget that speeding is dangerous. For more information, go to

http://www.businessweek.com/innovate/content/dec2007/id2007125_252237.htm?campaign_id=mag_Dec6&link_position=link30 Source: Business Week, December 5, 2007

Arizona Attorney Plasters Drunk Drivers' Mug Shots on Web, Billboards

A prosecutor is giving drunk drivers a starring role in Phoenix billboards and a Web site. Mug shots are posted to www.stopduiaz.com, and some of those convicted of a felony will find themselves on billboards under the headline "Drive drunk, see your mug shot here." Andrew P. Thomas, the county attorney, came up with the idea to inform the public about drunk driving laws and to serve as a deterrent. The program costs around \$700,000 and is paid for with a state justice grant and assets seized in racketeering convictions. Mothers Against Drunk Driving likes the informational aspect of the campaign but would rather see research- and science-based activities to prevent drunk driving. For more information, go to

<http://www.nytimes.com/2007/12/10/us/10drunk.html?ex=1354942800&en=3848204e1a67c01c&ei=5090&partner=rssuserland&emc=rss> Source: The New York Times, December 10, 2007



New Car Gadgets Appeal to Tech-Savvy Consumers

With Ford's Sync, an onboard computer can dial contacts listed in a driver's phone, play music on an iPod by voice command and download and read text messages aloud. The partnership between Ford and Microsoft is an attempt to appeal to consumers by offering up technology. Not all phones work with every feature of Sync, but upgrades are always a possibility. "Right now, we're trying to decide what customers will most be excited about next," said Ford's lead engineer on the Sync project. The Toyota Prius features hands-free control over the navigation system, audio and air conditioning, and Chrysler offers a 20-gigabyte hard drive to store music and navigational information. Some of this new technology could have the unintended effect of creating distracted drivers. For more information, go to <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/12/08/AR2007120800006.html>

Source: The Washington Post, December 9, 2007

Foreign Automakers Develop Drowsy Driving Alerts

Saab and Volvo are planning to introduce systems that alert drowsy drivers. Volvo's Driver Alert will be an option on several models in early 2008. The system monitors the distance between the car and surrounding road markings to determine whether the car is being driven in a "controlled" fashion. If it's not, the warning "Driver alert, time for a break," appears on the dashboard. Volvo also developed a lane departure warning system. Saab's Driver Attention Warning System uses two mini infrared cameras to record and analyze eye movement. If the driver's eyes are closed for more than a normal blink, a chime sounds and "Tired?" appears on the dash. A second warning announces "You are tired" and a third scolds "You are dangerously tired! Stop as soon as it is safe to do so!" The driver seat also vibrates if the system detects that a driver's focus is on something other than the road.

Source: MSNBC, November 30, 2007

IRS Releases New 2008 Per-Mile Business Rates

The Internal Revenue Service increased the per-mile business driving rate from 48.5 cents per mile in 2007 to 50.5 cents for 2008. The rate hike reflects increasing costs for fuel, insurance and depreciation.

Sensors Not Allowed during Driving Tests in Pennsylvania

If proximity sensors on vehicles can't be disabled during a driving test, the test can't be completed in Pennsylvania. The state's Department of Transportation says the sensors, which warn when one car is approaching another, give an unfair advantage. "The purpose of the test is to determine their ability to control the vehicle," a PennDOT spokeswoman said. "We want them to prove they can operate the vehicle without any assisted device." But not every driver knows about the sensor rules or even which ones are not allowed. Eventually the manual and permit application forms will mention the sensor policy. For more information, go to

http://www.pittsburghlive.com/x/pittsburghtrib/news/state/s_542541.html Source: Pittsburgh Tribune

News from USDOT

FMCSA Keeps Driving Limits in Interim Final Rule

Under an Interim Final Rule announced by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA), truck drivers will continue to drive only 11 hours within a 14-hour period, after which they must be off duty for at least 10 hours. The rule was developed after new data showed that safety levels have been maintained since the driving limit was set in 2003. "This proposal keeps in place hours-of-service limits that improve highway safety by ensuring that drivers are rested and ready to work," FMCSA Administrator John H. Hill said. The agency is gathering public comment and an underlying safety



analysis before issuing a final rule. To read the Interim Final Ruling go to:
<http://www.truckingsafety.org/PDF/fmcsa/hos12.27.2007.pdf>

Work-Home

Coalition about Healthy Mothers, Babies Redesigns Web Site

The National Healthy Mother, Healthy Babies Coalition redesigned its Web site. The improved site makes it easier for parents and partners to find information about health and safety. For more information, go to www.hmhb.org

UK Company Creates Online Game about Traffic Safety for Schools

Nestlé Waters Direct is focusing on community road safety by launching an online board game for schools across the United Kingdom. Participants complete journeys around an online board and try to get as many points as possible by answering safety questions correctly. The scores are added to school and national leader boards, so individuals or schools can compete with each other. The game is a way to educate young people about road safety issues in an engaging manner.

Source: FleetNews, December 4, 2007

International Traffic Safety News

Fleets Find Fault with Telematics

Complaining about pushy salesmen, poor advice and confusing pricing structures, some fleet managers are not renewing their contracts with telematics providers. The unhappy managers say the providers have little understanding of the fleet industry. But one service provider says that many fleet operators aren't equipped to handle the amount of data that a telematics system emits. The operators are missing opportunities to reduce costs, improve productivity and enhance customer service.

Source: FleetNews, December 4, 2007

Driver Safety also Important for Marketing, Branding

Fleet managers can go beyond using safety initiatives to meet their duty-of-care requirements and leverage them as a marketing tool. Branding fleets as leaders in driver safety brings down costs and improves reputation but also offers an opportunity for community safety. For example, BT offers mentoring programs for young drivers. "By targeting young drivers you're clearly doing something for the community, and developing something that goes beyond compliance is important from a branding point of view," researcher Dr. Will Murray said. Source: FleetNews, December 11, 2007

Majority of Fleets Don't Conduct Risk Assessments

Most fleets do not conduct and review assessments on all organizational, management and employee travel risks, according to an audit by the Fleet Safety Forum, a division of the United Kingdom road safety charity Brake. Also, half of fleets do not have policies and procedures regarding reversing safety, temporary and agency labor and employees driving their own vehicles for work. To help improve the situation, Brake will hold a fleet safety benchmarking seminar on Jan. 16. Fleet managers will learn how to benchmark their crash data and procedures to keep their drivers safe. "Benchmarking crash data and fleet safety policies against other companies is one key way companies can share best practice and review their risk management procedures," Brake's head of education said. Brake and the Department for Transport also created a new Web site, www.fleetsafetybenchmarking.net, that lets firms anonymously compare their procedures and data with others. Source: FleetNews, December 12, 2007



Changes in Cell Phone Law Deter their Use behind the Wheel

After penalties for using a cell phone while driving were increased in February, the number of drivers using a handheld phone decreased 40 percent. The number of drivers who still use a cell phone while driving is now 1 percent of the drivers on the road, less than the 1.7 percent last year. "The Government introduced this tough penalty to stamp down on mobile phone use at the wheel and this survey suggests more and more motorists are getting the message," the road safety minister said. However, 2.4 percent of commercial drivers still use their handheld phones. The number of drivers using hands-free phones dropped, from 0.9 percent to 0.4 percent in the last year.

Source: FleetNews, December 12, 2007

Fleet Managers Turn to Pros to Recover Foreign Vehicle Losses

Fleet managers are concerned with the recovering losses from crashes involving foreign vehicles, because the task can be frustratingly difficult. Because it can be nearly impossible to recoup the losses, many fleet managers are turning to professional recovery agents. In addition to the standard injury and vehicle repair, costs such as inconvenience, vehicle downtime and lost business can be claimed. Drivers involved in a crash with a foreign vehicle must know to get the other driver's name, registration and name of the company. Source: FleetNews, December 12, 2007